

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 10/811,986

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus, comprising:
 - a conveyor for conveying a sheet on a conveying path;
 - a discharging device disposed near an exit of said conveying path for discharging out said sheet, said discharging device being positioned apart from said conveyor, a discharging speed of said discharging device being higher than a conveying speed of said conveyor;
 - a pushing device for allowing said discharging device to discharge said sheet by pushing said sheet toward said discharging device, when a rear edge of said sheet passes said conveyor.
2. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said pushing device is shiftable between a push position in which said pushing device pushes said sheet toward said discharging device and a retracting position in which said pushing device leaves from said discharging device.
3. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 2, said pushing device comprising:
 - a guide member disposed such that said guide member may be pushed up to said retracting position; and
 - a push roller attached to said guide member, for contacting said sheet to said discharging device, when said pushing device is in said push position.

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4. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 3, wherein said discharging device is a drive roller, and said drive roller nips and discharges said sheet with said push roller.

5. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 4, wherein said guide member is substantially horizontally in said push position, and said sheet conveyor conveys upward with inclination such that an end of said sheet pushes up said guide member in said push position.

6. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 5, wherein said sheet conveyor is plural conveying roller pairs which are disposed on said conveying path and include a last conveying roller pair disposed at a downstream end thereof, and said last conveying roller pair includes an upper roller and a lower roller.

7. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 6, wherein said guide member is swingably attached to a shaft of said upper roller.

8. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein a middle of a periphery of said drive roller has a concavely curved surface.

9. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein said upper roller is a protruding roller whose periphery has a convexly curved middle portion, said lower

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roller is a retracting roller whose periphery has a concavely curved middle portion corresponding to the shape of said protruding roller, for curling said sheet.

10. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 9, wherein said sheet comprises plural sheets arranged in zigzag among plural rows in said conveying path.

11. (original): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 10, further comprising an endless belt for receiving said sheet which is discharged by said discharging device, said endless belt being moved in a direction perpendicular to a discharging direction of said discharging device for arranging said sheet in an row with reversing said sheet.

12. (new): A sheet discharging apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein said conveyor includes a conveying roller pair, and the discharging device is a drive roller, and the sheet does not contact the drive roller before it leaves the conveying roller pair.